Public invited to release of endangered California Condors on Saturday, Sept. 22, at Vermilion Cliffs National Monument

VERMILION CLIFFS, Ariz. – There is nothing quite as iconic in the western United States as a California Condor soaring over the red-rock-canyon landscapes of northern Arizona and southern Utah. Thanks to people working together to recover this species, condors have become a fixture in southwestern skies. On National Public Lands day this year, the public is invited to join the recovery effort by witnessing first-hand a spectacular release into the wild of several captive-bred young condors.

California Condors will be released by The Peregrine Fund atop the spectacular cliffs in Vermilion Cliffs National Monument in northern Arizona at 11 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 22. The public is welcome to observe the release from a viewing area where spotting scopes provided by partners and Swarovski Optik will be set up and project personnel will be available to answer questions.

The release coincides with National Public Lands Day, the nation’s largest hands-on volunteer effort to improve and enhance America’s public lands. National Public Lands Day involves the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and other federal agencies, along with state and local governments and private groups.

- **Driving directions**: Take Highway 89A from Kanab or Page to the Vermilion Cliffs (from Flagstaff take Highway 89 to Highway 89A). Turn north onto BLM Road 1065 (a dirt road next to the small house just east of the Kaibab Plateau) and continue almost 3 miles.
- **Bring**: Spotting scope or binoculars, sunscreen, water, snack, chair and layered clothing
- **Details**: Informational kiosk, shade structure, and restroom at the site.

This will be the 23rd annual public release of condors in Arizona since the southwest condor recovery program began in 1996. Condors are produced at The Peregrine Fund’s World Center for Birds
of Prey in Boise, Idaho, the Oregon Zoo, Los Angeles Zoo, and San Diego Zoo Safari Park and then transported to release sites annually for release to the wild.

The historical California Condor population declined to just 22 individuals in the 1980s when the greater California Condor Recovery Program was initiated to save the species from extinction. As of July 25, 2018 there were 85 condors in the wild in the rugged canyon country of northern Arizona and southern Utah and the total world population of endangered California Condors numbers nearly 500 individuals, with more than half flying in the wilds of Arizona, Utah, California, and Mexico.

The Arizona-Utah recovery effort is a cooperative program by federal, state, and private partners, including The Peregrine Fund, Arizona Game and Fish Department, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management’s Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, Grand Canyon and Zion national parks, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, and Kaibab and Dixie national forests among many other supporting groups and individuals.

For more information about California Condors in Arizona: http://www.peregrinefund.org/condor

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